Umiam Mining Private Ltd. (M/s LUMPL) in Sohra Tehsil of East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya were closed down by the State Government of Meghalaya on the recommendations of the Ministry of Environment and Forests as the User Agency had not obtained the mandatory prior approval of the Central Government under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

So far as the action against the assessor (ERMI) is concerned, the onus of providing the correct information lies with the project proponent and therefore no action has been contemplated against the assessor. At present the matter is *sub-judice* in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

MRTS in Hyderabad

* 119. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Union Government to support the Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) Project under Viability Gap Funding Scheme (VGFS) of Government of India to meet the traffic needs of the busiest corridors of Hyderabad city;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the latest status of the above said proposal; and

(d) by when the minimum assistance of 20 per cent of the project cost is likely to be released to the State Government towards the VGF share?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI AJAY MAKEN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of Andhra Pradesh (GOAP) sought Viability Gap Funding (VGF) assistance of Government of India (GOI) under the scheme, "Financial Support to Public Private Partnership in Infrastructure" of Ministry of Finance for implementation of Hyderabad Mass Rapid Transit System project on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) route on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis in the following traffic corridors:—

Line I:	Miyapur-Panjagutta-M.J. Market-L.B. Nagar	29.87 km
Line II:	Jubilee Bus Station-Secunderabad RS-Sultan Bazar-Falaknuma	14.78 km
Line III:	OU(Hubsiguda)-Begumpet-Yusufguda-Shilparamam	21.74 km
Total length:		63.39 km

The estimated total project cost is Rs. 8760 crore. The financial plan suggested by the GOAP is as under:—

Govt, of India (VGF Grant)	Rs. 1692 crs. (19.5%)
Govt, of AP (VGF Grant)	Rs. 1692 crs. (19.5%)
GOAP Equity	Rs. 186 crs. (2.09%)
Concessionaire Equity	Rs. 1506 crs. (16.91%)
Debt	Rs. 3684 crs. (42%)
Total	Rs. 8760 crs.

GOAP also made a request for further assistance of GOI from Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission scheme in addition to VGF assistance from Ministry of Finance.

(c) The official level committee of Ministry of Finance on 1.5.2007 found the proposal to be in conformity of the VGF scheme and granted approval to GOAP to proceed with short-listing of bidders. GOAP has informed that the technical proposals submitted by the 5 pre-qualified international consortia companies are under evaluation.

(d) Since the project has not yet got the 'in-principle" approval of the Empowered Institution of the Ministry of Finance, it is too pre-mature to indicate the likely date for Government of India's approval of the proejct.

Stock of Titanium

† *120. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA: SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the 'Titanium' available in the country has been recognized by Government as atomic metals;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the annual production of this metal; and

(d) the amount of reserves of this metal estimated so for?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) No Sir, 'Titanium' is not recognized as 'Atomic Metal' by Government. However, Titanium bearing minerals and ores (ilmenite, rutile and leucoxene) are listed as 'Atomic Minerals' under entry No. 7 of Part 'B' of the First Schedule to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulations) Act, 1957.

(c) The total production of titanium bearing minerals during 2005-06 was 7,24,542 tonnes i.e. 7,04,243 tonnes of ilmenite and 20,299 tonnes of rutile. Presently no plant in India produces Titanium metal on commercial scale. However, a pilot plant of 3 ton per batch capacity exists at the Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory (DMRL), Hyderabad.

(d) The Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) over a period of more than five decades carried out survey and exploration for inland riverine/teri and beach sand placer deposits. AMD has established 461.37 million tonne of ilmenite, 26.82 million tonne of rutile and 16.07 million tonne of leucoxene. The ilmenite resource contains about 210 million tonne of Titanium Dioxide ($Ti0_2$) and rutile resource contains about 20 million tonne of $Ti0_2$. Put together this contains approximately 138 million tonne of Titanium metal.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Stock of Thorium

† 416. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an immense reserve of Thorium to fulfil the energy needs of the country, which can create adequate power base on nuclear technology;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.